

Air Force sustainment funding system through the development and implementation of Centralized Asset Management (CAM). These efforts allowed the Air Force to make decisions within constrained funding, enabling warfighters to focus on their primary missions, and established a new level of credibility in warfighter support overall.

General Gabreski was a leader and inspiration to the Dayton community. During her time at WPAFB, she participated in many events, offering advice to women in leadership roles. She is a credit to the Air Force and a source of support and inspiration to many throughout the military and the Dayton community.

As General Gabreski culminates a distinguished career of more than three decades of Air Force service, I appreciate her dedication to her country, her outstanding performance as the highest ranking female officer in the Air Force, and her significant contributions toward strengthening our military.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CIVIL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT OF 2009

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 8, 2009

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, today I rise to introduce the Civil Access to Justice Act of 2009. The purpose of this legislation is to reauthorize the Legal Services Corporation, which has not been reauthorized by Congress since 1977. Legal Services Corporation was established by Congress in 1974 to provide legal assistance to low-income people in civil matters. LSC directs and supervises the federal grants to local legal service providers who give legal assistance to low-income clients.

I am particularly pleased that we are introducing this bill, not only because it helps those in need, but because of my personal experiences with the program. Over 30 years ago, I was the founding Chairman of the Board of Peninsula Legal Aid Center, Inc., so I am aware of the need for resources to make a legal services program fully operational. In this bill, we are seeking to ensure that the Corporation has the resources required to help those in need.

The bill accomplishes several goals. It increases the authorized funding level for LSC to \$750 million. This is approximately the amount, adjusted for inflation, appropriated in 1981, which was the high watermark for LSC funding. LSC is currently funded at \$390 million—which, in current dollars, is well below the amount needed to fully fund the program. Currently, more than 80 percent of individuals who need civil legal representation do not have the means to obtain it. Families who need this assistance the most make less than 125 percent of the poverty line or about \$27,500 for a family of four. Nationally, 50 percent of these eligible applicants for legal assistance from federally funded programs are turned away mainly because these programs lack ample funding. Moreover, as the economy continues to decline, the number of individuals who will need legal representation will increase. We need to ensure that resources are available to provide legal services to those who cannot afford adequate representation.

The \$750 million authorized in the bill should be enough to ensure a minimum level of access to legal aid in every county in the country.

Although the program has not been reauthorized in over 30 years, appropriations bills over that time have placed restrictions on the activities that attorneys in LSC programs can provide. The bill lifts most of these restrictions, including collecting attorneys' fees, permitting legal aid attorneys to bringing class-action suits, and allowing lobbying with non-federal funds. In the spirit of compromise, the bill does maintain the prohibition on abortion related litigation and incorporates some limits on whom LSC-funded programs can represent, including prisoners challenging prison conditions and people convicted of illegal drug possession in public housing eviction proceedings. The bill also provides for more effective administration of LSC.

The Government Accountability Office wrote reports highlighting issues with the governance of LSC. In an August 2007 report, GAO found "... LSC has not kept up with evolving reforms aimed at strengthening internal control over an organization's financial reporting process and systems." That same report stated that "The current board has four committees, but none are specifically targeted at providing critical audit, ethics, or compensation functions, which are important governance mechanisms commonly used in corporate governance structures. Because it has not taken advantage of opportunities to incorporate such practices, LSC's Board of Directors is at risk of not being able to fulfill its role of effective governance and oversight."

Overall, the Civil Access to Justice Act of 2009 will provide relief to those who need civil legal representation. I would like to thank Judiciary Committee Chairman CONYERS and Representatives COHEN, WATT, DELAHUNT, LINDA SÁNCHEZ and HANK JOHNSON for their hard work and dedication to this cause. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor and support this important legislation to ensure that those who need civil legal representation are able to obtain it.

ARMY STRYKER FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 8, 2009

Mr. TIBERI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to submit to the RECORD the attached information concerning a constituent and a mother of a soldier that served in Afghanistan.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 8, 2009.

Hon. ROBERT M. GATES,
Secretary of Defense,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: Last month I received a letter from a constituent and mother of a soldier that served in Afghanistan. She was concerned after learning that the 5th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) had not been authorized the necessary Improvised Explosive Device Detection Dogs (IEDDDs) for its mission.

After forwarding her concerns to the U.S. Department of the Army, I received a re-

sponse from U.S. Army Central Command dated September 30, 2009 from Chief of Staff Colonel Stephen M. Twitty. The response stated "On August 14, 2009, the command submitted an urgent universal needs statement to their higher headquarters, United States Forces—Afghanistan for 75 IEDDDs with handlers for immediate fielding" and that the request was still pending at that time.

It is my understanding that after fifty-six days of operations since the urgent request was made by commanders in the field, the 5th Brigade has yet to receive the necessary IEDDDs. I am concerned that commanders on the ground are not receiving resources they are requesting. Please provide an explanation of the plan that is in place to ensure that our troops on the ground have the assets needed to keep Americans safe and detect IEDs.

If you have any questions, please contact my district director, Mark Bell. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

PATRICK J. TIBERI,
Representative to Congress.

Enclosures.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, THIRD
ARMY, UNITED STATES ARMY CENTRAL,
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT
CHIEF OF STAFF, G1.

Fort McPherson, GA, September 30, 2009.

Hon. PATRICK J. TIBERI,
Representative in Congress,
Columbus, OH.

DEAR MR. TIBERI: Thank you for your recent letter to the Department of Defense on behalf of concerns.

The 5th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) arrived in Afghanistan in July 2009 and deployed into sector in August 2009 with all assigned mine detection equipment. The brigade is not authorized Improvised Explosive Device Detection Dogs (IEDDDs) or K9 handlers in accordance with their Headquarters, Department of the Army approved Modified Table of Organization and Equipment, dated April 16, 2009. On August 14, 2009, the command submitted an urgent universal needs statement to their higher headquarters, United States Forces—Afghanistan for 75 IEDDDs with handlers for immediate fielding. That request is still pending at this time.

This command stands ready to provide any further assistance required by your office.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN M. TWITTY,
Colonel (P), U.S. Army, Chief of Staff.

SEPTEMBER 14, 2009.

Re Army Stryker Force In Afghanistan.

SGT MARK BELL AND JASON DOMINGUEZ IN
PAT TIBERI'S OFFICE.

This last week, Army Stryker Force in Afghanistan was on the news. Their job is to sweep Afghan villages for IED's. They've lost 9 people in the last month. The point made was that they do not have bomb sniffing dogs or metal detectors. I actually watched a soldier trying to visually inspect a mud wall for an IED. This isn't the first time that I've seen such reports on the news or shows about the military.

If my information is correct, then those 9 lives lost cost the military 9 million dollars. This is outrageous. 9 families lost loved ones because their unit didn't have the proper equipment. Do you think that for 9 million, the Army could send dogs for every unit? Do I need to say Da.

I wrote you about the units needing dogs quite some time ago. Apparently, no one paid attention. If you're going to send the military, then you MUST equip them with